

Amendment dated 12/20/04
Response to Office Action dated 10/20/04

Application No. 09/737,098

REMARKS

With this response, claims 1, 4-9, 12-15, 18-22, and 27-29 are pending. Claims 1, 2, 4-10, 12-16, 18-22, and 24-29 are rejected by the Office Action. The Applicant is canceling claims 2, 10, 16, and 23-26. Claims 3, 11, and 17 were previously cancelled.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephonic interview on November 10, 2004, in which the features of claims 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29 were discussed. The claimed feature of "a conversion module that transforms a first digit and a second digit into a letter, wherein the first digit identifies a group of letters and the second digit identifies the letter within the group, and wherein the first digit and the second digit are entered by the caller" and the teachings of U.S. Patent No. 4,135,662 (Dlugos) were discussed.

Claims Rejections

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claims 1-2 and 4-8 are rejected by the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over US 5,901,214 (Schaffer) in view of US 6,253,069 (Mankovitz) and US 4,768,144 (Winter). The Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to include "a plurality of modems for converting a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal into at least one digit" and "a conversion module that transforms a first digit and a second digit into a letter, wherein the first digit identifies a group of letters and the second digit identifies the letter within the group, and wherein the first digit and the second digit are entered by the caller." The combination of Schaffer, Mankovitz, and Winter does not suggest these features. (Furthermore, as will be discussed with claim 24, Dlugos does not teach or even suggest these features.) Moreover, claims 4-8 ultimately depend from claim 1

Amendment dated 12/20/04
Response to Office Action dated 10/20/04

Application No. 09/737,098

and are patentable for at least the above reasons. The Applicant has cancelled claim 7. Thus, the Applicant requests reconsideration of claims 1 and 4-8.

Claims 9-10 and 12-14 are rejected by the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Winter and U.S. Patent No. 6,446,111 (Lowry). The Applicant has amended claim 9 to include "a plurality of modems for converting a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal into at least one digit" and "a conversion module that transforms a first digit and a second digit into a letter, wherein the first digit identifies a group of letters and the second digit identifies the letter within the group, and wherein the first digit and the second digit are entered by the caller." The combination of Shaffer, Winter, and Lowry does not teach these features. (Furthermore, as will be discussed with claim 24, Dlugos does not teach or even suggest these features.) Moreover, claims 12-14 ultimately depend from claim 9 and are patentable for at least the above reasons. The Applicant has cancelled claim 10. Thus, the Applicant requests reconsideration of claims 9 and 12-14.

Claims 15-16 and 18-20 are rejected by the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Winter. The Applicant has amended claim 15 to include "a plurality of modems for converting a dual-tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signal into at least one digit" and "a conversion module that transforms a first digit and a second digit into a letter, wherein the first digit identifies a group of letters and the second digit identifies the letter within the group, and wherein the first digit and the second digit are entered by the caller." The combination of Shaffer and Winter does not teach these features. (Furthermore, as will be discussed with claim 24, Dlugos does not teach or even suggest this feature.) Moreover, claims 18-20 ultimately depend from claim 15 and are patentable for at least the above reasons. The Applicant has cancelled claim 16.

Amendment dated 12/20/04
Response to Office Action dated 10/20/04

Application No. 09/737,098

Thus, the Applicant requests reconsideration of claims 15 and 18-20.

Claims 21 and 22 are rejected by the Office Action under 35 U.S.C 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Mankovitz, Winter and Lowery. The Applicant has amended claim 21 to include the feature of "means for receiving a plurality of two-character responses from the caller, wherein each two-character response represents a single ASCII character, and wherein each said two-character response corresponds to a plurality of keystrokes entered by the user." (Emphasis added.) The combination of Shaffer, Mankovitz, Winter, and Lowery does not suggest this feature. The Office Action alleges that Winter teaches "each two-character response represents a single ASCII character (column 13, lines 35-42) [The two characters of information are generated, the first character is an ASCII code and the second is an {EOF} of text]." As cited by the Office Action, Winter does disclose (Column 13, lines 35-42. Emphasis added.):

In general, whenever a key is pressed, two characters of information are generated by the terminal and are sent over the telephone line to the host computer. The first character is an ASCII character code. For example, the code may indicate a lower case "n". The second character is an end of text (EOT) character to indicate to the host computer to enter and to commence the function.

It appears that Winter merely teaches that the second character is generated by the terminal and not by the user entering the character. (Only a single key is pressed, i.e., there is only one keystroke.) Similarly, claim 22 includes the feature of "receiving a plurality of character responses from the caller to form a request, wherein each response represents a single ASCII character, wherein step (b) comprises receiving a plurality of two-character responses from the caller, wherein each two-character response represents a single ASCII character, wherein each said two-character response corresponds to a plurality of keystrokes, and wherein each two-character response corresponds to a plurality of input entries from the caller" and is patentable for at least the above reasons. The Applicant requests reconsideration of claims 21 and 22.

Amendment dated 12/20/04
Response to Office Action dated 10/20/04

Application No. 09/737,098

Claims 24 and 27-29 are rejected by the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Mankovitz, Winter, and US 4,135,662 (Dlugos). The Applicant has previously amended claim 24 to include the feature of "a conversion module that transforms a first digit and a second digit into a letter, wherein the first digit identifies a group of letters and the second digit identifies the letter within the group, and wherein the first digit and the second digit are entered by the caller. (Emphasis added.) Dlugos does teach (Column 5, lines 18-23. Emphasis added.)

The programmable logic array 56a receives either the BCD DIGIT SIGNALS (a-d) or the ERROR SIGNALS (A-G) and converts such signals directly into letter or numeral segment codes which are sequentially pulled to place either numerical data or prompting messages into the display 22a.

However, Dlugos teaches that either BCD DIGIT SIGNALS or ERROR SIGNALS (but not both digits) are used by microprocessor 16 (as shown in Figure 16) and disclosed in Dlugos (column 4, line 61 – column 5, line 42). The Applicant has cancelled claim 24 but has included the features of claims 2 and 24 into claim 1 as amended. Similarly, claim 27 includes the feature of "a conversion module that transforms a first digit and a second digit into a letter, wherein the first digit identifies a group of letters and the second digit identifies the letter within the group, and wherein the first digit and the second digit are entered by the caller" and is patentable for at least the above reasons. Moreover, claims 28-29 ultimately depend from claim 27. The Applicant requests reconsideration of claims 27-29.

Claim 25 is rejected by the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Winter, Lowery and Dlugos. The above discussion regarding claim 24 applies. The Applicant has cancelled claim 25 and has incorporated the features of claims 10 and 25 into claim 9.

Amendment dated 12/20/04

Application No. 09/737 099

Claim 26 is rejected under the Office Action under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Winter and Dlugos. The above discussion regarding claim 24 applies. The Applicant has cancelled claim 26 and has incorporated the features of claims 16 and 26 into claim 15.

CONCLUSION

All objections and rejections have been addressed. Hence, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance, and a notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 20, 2004

By: Kenneth F. Smolik
Kenneth F. Smolik
Registration No. 44,344
BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.
10 South Wacker Drive
Suite 3000
Chicago, Illinois 60606
Telephone: 312-463-5000
Facsimile: 312-463-5000